



National Park Service – Fire Education, Prevention and Information Communication & Education - Year One Evaluation

Name:

National Park Service Site / Region:

Other sites for which you provide support:

1. What types of guidance have you received from your supervisor, park, regional office, and national office for this position? Please explain.

Guidance from my supervisor has been very positive, including prioritizing the many projects we want to accomplish and receiving training that would be beneficial for me. Regional feedback to me directly has been minimal. National support has been in providing materials and support, keeping us abreast on issues, and maintaining communications via email and web postings.

I have not had an immediate supervisor this year – our FMO position has been vacant. The Chief Ranger has provided general supervision, as has the regional office. The national office has provided information when I asked for it, and has sent out e-mails to all of us in these positions, announcing various websites and other information.

I have a very good working relationship with my supervisor XXX, Park FMO. Since this is a new position at XXX, I have been generally afforded the responsibility to take the Fire Education and Information Specialist position in the direction I and other members of the park, region and national offices think it should go. I receive guidance from XXX mainly in being updated on a daily basis as to issues and concerns that may affect my program and how XXX sees my role in these. I also update XXX on the projects I am working on and XXX reviews and edits (if needed) any information or publications that come out of my office. At times, I also receive guidance from some of the other parks I support as to their informational needs.

The XXX office has provided some guidance, but since there is not a defined FEPIS position in the XXX, most of it comes indirectly through the park FMO. Most of it is in the form of requests for “Success Stories” for XXX and the other park sites we support. Some guidance is received at the annual Regional FMO conferences.

I receive a great deal of guidance from both Roberta D’Amico and Tina Boehle in the NIFC office. Most of the guidance is in response to questions concerning policy, training and access to fire-related information.

I have been very lucky to work with incredibly supportive supervisors. XXX (The parks’ PIO) is my immediate supervisor but I also work closely with XXX (Fire Management Officer), XXX

(Chief of Interpretation), and XXX (Natural Resources Specialist). These four people have given me editorial, financial, moral, and subject matter support. Their help has been a valuable tool. I have had very little interaction specifically about my job with the regional office. I do communicate regularly with Roberta and Tina at the national office.

I have received guidance from the national office through my supervisor as we work closely together on many projects for national-level communication of the NPS Fire Program for the regions and parks. The types of guidance I have received range from verbal discussions to written direction – sometimes very specific, sometimes very general.

Supervisor – provides constant support, guidance and new ideas, periodic constructive criticism and continual historical perspectives on management strategies etc
 Parks - park particular interpretation/education information, themes, agendas and education needs, feedback on fire related projects implemented, ideas for direction, visitor perspectives
 Regional Office – provides support, technical information/education and equipment, administrative needs, new ideas
 National Office – provides outlets for fire information for ex “Success Stories 02,” provides support, training opportunities

Fire and fuels projects direct a lot of the work.

My supervisor and I develop an annual workplan in consultation with the Fire Management Officer and the Superintendent. The national office has guided us toward national partnerships that we can implement at the local level such as SCA and Project Learning Tree.

Both the Superintendent and my supervisor have spent much of their careers at XXX and have a strong perspective on how fire management relates to overall park management and community relations. They were both here before, during, and after the XXX Fire and have been significantly involved in the interagency and community outreach catalyzed by that event. I have received a great deal of guidance from both of them.

Primarily general guidance with occasional specific projects. Guidance and projects from supervisor, XXX, Region; XXX, Region; Roberta D’Amico, NIFC. National Fire Plan. NPS Fire Communications Plan. Correctly ordered 10 Standard Firefighting Orders. Projects from XXX, Region; supported fire information activities at XXX, working with FMOs XXX and XXX.

-Minimal guidance provided at all levels, but all seem generally satisfied with results. A GS-11 should be able to function independently but being in new first of the kind positions, some guidance/feedback is required to know if intended objectives are being met.
 -Need some national direction on major common NPS issues, which may be forthcoming in the strategic management plan.

Supervisor is supportive. XXX encourages communicating and education of folks on the fire program through success stories and reports. XXX supports educational programs and working with the other divisions in the park. The national level...Roberta and Tina especially are very supportive and offer lots of suggestions and guidance. The training's and meetings have helped me a great deal in determining ways to improve the program at XXX. Work still needs to be done but things are moving forward.

I have received guidance in many capacities in this job. All have been very timely, very professional and applicable to any issue I brought up. We have shared issues via our e-mail network which has been helpful. We have also received individualized help as needed in timely fashion from our regional specialist, XXX, helpful website assistance from Tina, and Roberta has released a ton of helpful information and or contacts. I never felt very alone as we could always tie into our website or e-mail network.

Guidance from my supervisor/park has been low to moderate. There isn't a strong sense of what message to send, and how best to send the message. (I also was between supervisors for eight months; the new supervisor has been very supportive.) I've asked for/received little guidance from the regional office; I've asked for/received a great deal of support on the national level; lots of advice, backing, and financial assistance.

XXX, our new FMO, has only been in the park a few months. He has reviewed my 2002 performance appraisal from the acting FMO, Mike XXX. XXX made some adjustments for my FY2003 EPPRR and consolidated five critical results elements into four elements. XXX has talked with me regarding where he felt the Fire Education/Information Program should go in the future with the surrounding communities and cooperators.

XXX is now in the process of reviewing my Draft XXX and XXX Goals and Strategy document and my FY-03/04 Strategic Work Plan.

2. What are the fire communication/education program goals for your area/site?

Sharing fire management accomplishments internally and externally; increased public information during fire events of high visibility (fire use, prescribed fire, suppression fires, mechanical fuels treatment); defensible space education; providing information internally, locally, and to visitors to the area about the role of fire in the ecosystem and the importance of support for keeping fire on the landscape.

- A. Education Goal: Inform and educate the park staff and the public about fire safety, prevention, and ecology through internal briefings, school programs, community and civic organization presentations, and communication with local stakeholders. Increase awareness of the National Park Service and park fire management programs and management objectives.

03 Strategy – Begin developing an education curriculum for fifth-grade children.
Complete four newsletters for a parkwide audience in the specialty areas of administration, fire effects, operations, and education – to explain what we do, and follow up on a general newsletter issued in January.

- B. Wildland/Urban Interface Goal: Minimize threats to private property in the event of a wildland fire by helping neighboring communities implement firewise practices.

03 Strategy - Complete a WUI/SCA project this summer, mapping structures in the interface as part of an impending WUI plan.

- C. Community Assistance Goal: Provide a recognizable park contact for rural fire departments and the general community, when they have questions and/or issues in the realm of NPS fire management.

03 Strategy - Provide assistance to RFDs through the RFA program

- D. Interagency Cooperation Goal: Develop relationships with other agencies involved in fire management and suppression. Establish myself as a stable, predictable contact through which they can access NPS fire personnel and training, and/or obtain assistance in the NPS realm of the National Fire Plan.

03 Strategy – update interagency agreement, participate in annual interagency meeting, maintain contact with the new XXX fire representative, attend XXX Conference to maintain contacts

- E. Continued Education and Fire Science Goal: Develop my knowledge, skills, and abilities through regular training and research. Remain informed about the latest scientific research and educational techniques.

03 Strategy - Complete fire ecology course from University of Oregon

1. Develop and implement a fire communications/education/prevention program within the XXX Cluster Group with special emphasis placed upon the wildland-urban interface.
2. To effectively disperse NPS fire-related information both internally and externally.
3. To establish a cooperative working relationship with other federal, state and local fire management agencies.

(From the XXX draft *Fire and Fuels Management Plan*)

- GOAL #1 – To provide year-round education on fire ecology and fire history of the XXX. Communicate how fire and fuels management practices meet natural resource management goals and thus the mission of the National Park Service.
- GOAL #2 – To provide accurate and timely incident information for local, regional, and national fire operations as needed.
- GOAL #3 – To provide local communities, park residents, and park permittees with information on fire safety, fire prevention, defensible space, and fuels management.

The FI&E Program will emphasize the major goals of the *Fire and Fuels Management Plan* to increase public awareness and support. While there are a variety of management tools used in the parks, the fire program's overarching mission is to benefit park resources and society by restoring and maintaining the natural fire regime. The FI&E program will focus on this mission and will avoid dividing the program into small parts and isolating individual tools. For example, the parks will not interpret the concepts of prescribed fire separate from wildland fire use, suppression, mechanical treatment, preparedness, research, monitoring, or education since it is the combination of all eight tools that supports the parks' program.

The goals for the communication/education program at the national level are to disseminate information to the field, keep the field informed of what's happening at the national level and to provide a support system for communication/education to the parks and Fire Education Prevention and Information Specialists at the region and park level.

- Inform and educate XX NPS employees through various mediums about all aspects of fire management
- Develop and enhance communication between fire management and NPS employees by creating NPS XX intranet and internet fire web sites for each park, a semi-annual newsletter, wildland fire portable displays etc
- Integrate fire communications into all aspects of XX fire management, for ex. immediately implement an educational plan when a study from Fire Ecologist is complete
- Create long-standing working relationships with our partner agencies and fire organizations and include them in all aspects of NPS fire information, education and prevention

Fire Education Goal in the new Park Fire Management Plan:

- 1) Foster a High Degree of Understanding of Fire and Fuels Management among Park Employees, Neighbors, and Visitors

Additional proposed Fire Education Goals:

- 1) Develop understanding and support for use of prescribed fire as a management tool at XXX.
- 2) Develop understanding of fire and its effects in the central XXX ecosystem.
- 3) Develop understanding of fire as a multi-cultural practice that has shaped the XXX landscape over time.
- 4) Develop understanding of fire and fuels management internally & externally, including project objectives, field operations, and NEPA compliance.
- 5) Prevent losses to wildfire in the XXX wildland-urban interface.
- 6) Prevent accidental fire within XXX and its interface.
- 7) Build & maintain interagency and community partnerships to accomplish the goals above.
- 8) Promote visibility of the National Park Service, the NPS mission, and the NPS Fire Program through fire education activities.
- 9) Promote interdisciplinary collaboration between fire & fuels management; interpretation/education/public affairs; research & resource management (natural & cultural), and other disciplines as appropriate.

Specific fire education objectives are determined by the annual workplan.

Same as National Fire Plan, NPS Fire Communications Plan. And, take advantage of the teachable moments. Respond appropriately to area fire/interface conditions.

None specifically except as stated in performance appraisal

- A) Fuels Management and Community Protection. Using ecologically sound and environmentally based strategies, assist the park FMO with educational and information elements, by developing community information programs that facilitate awareness and support of the importance and benefits of various initiatives throughout the Fire Management Program, such as Firewise community planning, defensible space, and fuel management activities.
- B) Fire Prevention, Education and Information. Provide accurate and timely information to the media, employees, visitors and local residents about park fire and fuels management operations. Through press releases, bulletin boards and interpretive programs, notify the

public about current fire conditions affecting park use. At the same time, help people understand and appreciate the larger issue of fire's natural role in XXX and other areas of the XXX Region. This will be achieved by developing programs, conference poster presentations, civic group presentations, interpretive talks, brochures, computer based sources (Internet and Intranet) and other displays that convey the importance of fire and fuel management activities.

To educate park's fire program to park visitors and nearby communities, as well as at the regional state and national levels.

Continue with press releases and marketing RX treated acres in XXX National XXX Park and XXX National XXX. Continue the fire prevention week program in the elementary schools in October.

"Educate employees and the public about the scope and effect of wildland fire management, including fuels management, resource protection, prevention, hazard/risk assessment, mitigation and rehabilitation, and fire's role in ecosystem management by cooperating with the XXX Division of Interpretation to develop fire education and interpretation programs."

XXX and XXX are dedicated to providing high-quality fire *information and education* for as many people as possible while maintaining a level of service that demonstrates the parks' professionalism. Based on the ecological principles and operational procedures outlined in the 1997 revised Fire Management Plan the Fire Information and Education (FI&E) Program has five goals:

- GOAL #1 – To provide year-round education on fire ecology and fire history of the XXX Area and XXX. Communicate how fire and fuels management practices meet natural resource management goals and thus the mission of the National Park Service.
- GOAL #2 – To provide accurate and timely incident information for local, regional, and national fire operations as needed.
- GOAL #3 – To provide local communities, park residents, and park permittees with information on fire safety, fire prevention, defensible space, and fuels management.
- GOAL #4 – Build and maintain interagency and community partnerships to accomplish the goals above.
- GOAL #5 – Promote interdisciplinary collaboration between fire and fuels management interpretation/education/public affairs; research & resource management (natural & cultural), and other disciplines as appropriate.

3. How are you evaluating the area's program?

To be honest with you, I don't have an evaluation process established. Everything is so new that many of the things we do feel like a success because there is no precedent.

I guess I'm not. Any suggestions?

I am trying to obtain feedback from all involved parties, both on our staff, regional and national staff and from other fire management agencies as to how the FEPIS program in XXX and its cluster parks is progressing. I also try to keep updated on what other parks with FEPIS programs are doing for a comparison. I keep in close contact with my direct supervisor as to how XXX feels our program is doing and what can be done to improve it.

Honestly, I think evaluation is one of the short-comings of our fire education program. I try to get feedback from employees, residents, partners, etc. but it is anecdotal. Before I arrived at XXX, the park initiated a resident survey for every household in XXX (a neighboring community). People were asked in depth questions about their understanding of the fire and fuels management program as well as their overall impressions of its success. Many of the projects I have undertaken over the last XXX years, were based on things we learned from that survey. For example, it was clear people did not feel informed about planned fire operations. To meet their needs, we started an annual community newsletter and erected a permanent information bulletin board for fire in the center of town. It would be interesting to repeat the survey in the next few years and see if people feel better informed.

The area's program is evaluated through feedback from the field. An evaluation will soon be sent to more thoroughly evaluate the national communications/education program.

- Constant dialogue, feed back and constructive criticism from all members of XXX NPS fire management staff about fire communication program through email, phone and periodic meetings
 - Constant dialogue with XXX NPS employees via periodic messages requesting feedback on fire related programs and normal avenues for conversation
 - Constant dialogue with cooperating agencies, seek out opportunities to work together on "Firewise workshops" "Fire in XXX" teach the teacher workshops and in so doing, critiquing each other etc
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The program is evaluated during the mid-season and end of year reviews. This evaluation focuses on whether objectives for the year we met or not, and analyzes their outcomes. Ongoing dialogue also provides continuous "formative assessment".

An education consultant hired by the Learning Center, also provided some evaluation of the fire education program based on interviews with the FEPIS, and with perspective as an evaluator of the SCA program at XXX.

Keeping my ears and eyes open. Asking questions of those I serve. Looking around my communities. Also, XXX Tech has a grant to evaluate some aspects of the interagency efforts at fire communications. I met with XXX and his graduate assistant XXX.

-No formal evaluations other than performance appraisal and seasonal preparedness review.
-Conducted formal survey of SCA Fire Education Corps, which indicated high level of public satisfaction.

This is something that would be nice to have standards and to see how other parks are doing this. I keep track of yearly stats for programs like hikes, events, fairs and the Jr. Fire program. I include these in an annual report on XXX fire program

By the number of news articles printed and the feedback we get from concessionaires and general publics on their knowledge of our RX Program.

Not well; there hasn't been a lot of work in the field to evaluate.

Three annual performance reviews with a final Employee Performance Plan and Results Report.

4. Where do you think your site's program and the national program need to go? Please explain.

I think the site and national programs need to have the same overall goals, but I've seen an incredible diversity in the way the different FEPISs are using this position. I think it's very important that each FEPIS tailor the program to meet the specific needs of the area in which they are working. I would like to see us have more strategies for addressing various concerns, maybe with some talking points provided. This would allow us to be both proactive and cohesive.

I think less emphasis on prevention (which is a declining problem here) and WUI (except for mapping, and park WUI projects) and more emphasis on education is the direction I need to take our program. I'd like to develop a fire ecology academy for seniors at the local high school, which would culminate in a prescribed burn demonstration. I think the national program should concentrate on giving us guidance and developing research/materials for our use. By that I mean locating important discoveries in fire science research and distributing the information and working with Project Learning Tree or the national Teacher's Organization to develop educational ideas and materials. All of us need a tree cookie with discernable fire scars. It's the kind of thing we would use in any educational program. Maybe fire experiment kits - like the ones we saw demonstrated at our last conference – stuff like that.

XXX has a well established and complex fire program, and overall, I believe our program is headed in the right direction. I think our program may need to reach out and assist our other cluster parks in their fire management efforts, since most have few, if any, staff devoted to fire. I hope to become more involved with these parks in their informational needs. We also need to continue our good working relationship with the other fire management agencies in the area.

How the national program needs to go is a difficult question to answer. I think the main concern is the amount of work that is being asked of specific parks from both the national and regional offices. It seems there is always a deadline for something just around the corner. It also seems that many times there is a lack of communication between all the layers in the fire program and that messages are conflicting, especially among the different fire management agencies. A National Fire Program that incorporates all the agencies may be an answer, but it would be a long time in coming and would probably generate much controversy.

I think we need to stand by the NPS mission, both locally and nationally, and be voices for ecosystem management. It is important to highlight our commitment to WUI and community protection but it is irresponsible to abandon our other resource management goals. I feel like outside pressures are pushing us in that direction. I hate to see the NPS folded up and packaged with every other fire management agency. We have valuable information and experiences to share with the public that come from years of "protecting and preserving" our various sites.

I believe it is still an evolving program and we have achieved some great things in the first year and a half. The national level program needs to become more prominent and this will happen as there are more Fire Education, Prevention, and Information Specialists in the field.

I would like to see this program progress in such a way that it is integrated into all other areas of fire management. I would like to see people speak about fire communications as easily as we speak about management options or succession processes. I will attempt to reach this goal by working closely with my fire management peers, constantly brainstorming ideas for integrating fire communications into their programs. For instance, the XXX Management Officer is in the process of working on a strategic plan and he has included fire education into aspects of that plan. With my help in providing training, XXX hopes to task a seasonal with updating a fire information center in their office. The fire information center will include not only current fire information but also, essays, articles and maybe even art? Eventually I would also like to develop XXX fire specific displays, posters and educational tools. So many of the educational tools offered deal strictly with the XXX ecosystems. The concepts behind the tools we can use, but the actual tools do not apply to teachers and educators here in XXX. Finally with the help of others, I will create a long-term strategic plan which will provide programmatic direction for fire communications in XXX and help me reach many of the goals that have been stated.

Concerning the national office, it is not clear to me where the program is headed. This could be a function of me being so new but I do wonder, "What are the long-term goals?" I would like to see a National Park Service Fire Communication and Education Committee formed. My hope is that this committee could provide long-term goals and programmatic direction to the FEPIS, provide progressive educational tools, would embrace fire prevention and provide for a forum of discussion.

Commitment to curriculum-based fire education in schools: This is a sustainable approach to community-based education and fire wise assessment which can be done by students in their own neighborhoods.

Focus on resource-based fire education, dealing with the role of fire in ecosystems: The NPS program should not get overly involved in structural protection which is the responsibility of the local agencies. However, we can help strengthen their ability to do defensible space / fire wise education (more effectively than they currently do.)

Fire education should have a strong relationship to the fire effects program and Learning Centers: There is much that needs to be learned about fire ecology, including its social dimensions.

Fire education needs to be a strong element in fire management plans and burn plans: FEPIS should be integral to this planning process.

BAEER Teams should include fire education as a rehabilitation strategy.

Continue to focus on NFP & FCP evaluating efforts against their goals. Continue to look for and take advantage of teachable moments & other opportunities to share key information in appropriate ways. I'm sure as a group we can synergistically create some opportunities and methods, too.

Fire management needs to improve working relationships within resource management division and other divisions to gain trust and support. Fire is somewhat distanced because it is so well financed and most park staff don't have a clear understanding of the issues and how complicated fire management really is. Communications can go along way to resolve misunderstandings and create good teamwork.

We need to continue getting the messages out about fire in a healthy forest, about hazardous fuels and how the NPS is working towards this education. I think we need to continue to work together to find the ideas that work...like brochures, exhibits and educational programs.

I also think long term goals need to be identified. I know I can use some insight on what other parks are doing.

Continued Participation of EPI's to market fire successes and unit successes in fire. Each unit needs to be on board with a unit website.

In the park: we need to develop 2-3 programs to target community groups, neighborhood associations and HOAs to educate and coordinate in the role of fire in this ecosystem, defensible space techniques, and homeowner/personal responsibilities. Nationally (and interagency): continue to integrate both the natural role of fire and fire prevention into all national messages, not just what we're doing in suppression.

Our park's program should be more integrated with our neighboring USFS cooperators, especially in the fire prevention arena. Our park's program in education should expand with additional school outreach and summer interpretive activities.

I would like to see the National Program tackle a multi-media presentation regarding Fire Management Programs on our Public Lands and current challenges facing these programs. Produce a special for a broad based audience to be aired on prime time TV. The goals of this presentation would be:

1. Further educate the general public about fire ecology in various ecosystems throughout the country and the important role fire plays in these systems.
2. The history of fire suppression and management in the country.
3. Current state of fuels build-up and related issues regarding managing lands and fire.
4. Current efforts to reduce fuels build-up and reintroduce fire in the ecosystem and protect lives and property.

5. State the challenges that currently lie in front of us and recommend solutions.
6. Garner public support and understanding of all of our fire management activities.

5. What was the most notable success that the program accomplished at your site that others may learn from? Please explain.

Starting the process of getting more fire information on the park's web page.
 Very successful SCA team that fit right into our interagency goals.
 The establishment of a success story template and a monthly scheduled article.

We hosted one of the first SCA teams, and learned a great deal. I've submitted those "lessons learned" already, and will be on the panel at our meeting.

I believe our close working relationship between the other federal, state and local fire management agencies through our XXX Interagency Fire Management Area, and specifically the Fire information, Mitigation and Education Committee is something that others may learn from. We met on a regular basis and discuss issues that effect interagency fire management in XXX Country and come up with ways of working together to address these issues through information and education. We work together developing such things as fire-related school programs, brochures, posters, radio spots, press releases, displays, community assistance programs and utilize these products in a wide variety of forums.

Over the last XXX years, a few things stand out in my mind:

- Training – Each year, we offer parkwide inter-divisional fire education training, in-depth fire ecology training for new interpretive seasonals, and advanced fire management issues training for returning interpretive seasonals. These classes have been a valuable part of ensuring high quality interpretive programs across the parks (hikes, evening programs, and roving) which address fire management.
 - Community Newsletter – Last summer, we mailed our fourth annual community newsletter about fire and fuels management. The newsletter goes to every resident in six local communities (approx. 2,300 households). The newsletter, which is mailed in early summer, describes specific projects/burns planned for the upcoming season so people know what to expect.
 - Fire Education Video – Hired a contractor to create a 12-minute video (shot during a prescribed fire operation in XXX)
 - Teacher Workshops – I have hosted/facilitated four teacher workshops (one specifically about fire). This has strengthened park relationships with local schools and teachers.
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I believe that the most notable success is the amount of information being disseminated through the InsideNPS Fire & Aviation website as well as the many contacts made through e-mail (Byte-sized Fire News, Communication & Education Updates, etc.)

Soon after my arrival to XXX the first fire igniting, I implemented a fire messaging system via lotus notes. I sent out a brief, bullet like note to all XXX employees that stated where the wildland fire ignited, how large it was, fire behavior, weather, and what type of monitoring was

being done on it. In order to start educating employees about fire management, I opted to use “fire vernacular” in the messages and in so doing supplied a brief definition to the “new” word. I introduced only one new word in each message and then tried to include that word in a follow up message. I followed this initial message with periodic updates throughout the fire season. Current maps and photos were sent to the regional fire management web page. Furthermore, we quickly got the XXX intranet fire management web page up and running and on this page I put ArcView maps and photos. In the messages I continually directed people to both of these sites for further fire information and visuals. When fires started in other parks throughout XXX, I wrote similar messages to all employees in those parks.

This messaging system was a great success for many reasons. XXX NPS employees had never before received current fire related information and visuals. Upon receiving the information, people surged with excitement. They wanted to know more. In turn they called or wrote me, having learned about the new Fire Communication position in the messages. Secondly, XXX employees and visitors alike often only see smoke. They do not see fire. Showing NPS employee’s photos and maps allowed them the opportunity to see flaming fronts, see and thus understand for example what fire mosaic means, observe fire growth, and see country they would not usually see. NPS employees in turn passed this info on to visitors.

- 1) Developed interagency relationships through fire safe council, fire departments, education partners, and interdisciplinary work.
- 2) Produced 2 major publications which helped convey scope of fire programs.
- 3) Increased community communications (internal/external) during RX burns.
- 4) Draft XXX Fire Education Strategy began team building and dialogue.

Interagency Fire Prevention and Education Team. Most visibly, we produced a traveling WUI exhibit. We’ve done additional work developing and delivering messages in response to high fire danger and sharing that work with fellow interpreters at NAI. As an office of one, reaching out to my co-workers with the USDA Forest Service and DOF has been crucial – and creative and productive!

- Conducted successful public scoping for WUI fuel reduction projects resulting in a FONSI.
- General public acceptance and support for fuel reduction projects and slash pile burning. (Will Rx go the same?)
- Improved internal communications regarding fire management activities.
- Received frequent and generally positive media coverage of fire management activities.
- SCA Fire Education Corps very well received by local communities.
- Good compliance with lengthy fire restriction implementation.

The Junior Fire Fighter program is a big hit during the summer as well as at local schools. Many schools get plenty of fire prevention themes but few get programs on the role that fire plays in a healthy forest. It is also a good way to educate on prescribed fire and fuel reduction projects.

Doing success stories this really helps get the word out to people at the regional and national levels. Pictures speak volumes!

Our constant focus is marketing RX fire and administrating our XXX rural fire Assistance Program with seventeen rural fire departments participating across the state of XXX.

Junior Firefighter Program

Fire Information & Public Relations for the Hole RX Fire

Fire Exhibit/Presence at various public events: Return of the Salmon Festival-Coleman
Fire Prevention Fair-Anderson

Fire Management Power Point Program for Seasonal Orientation.

Team Leader Fire Prevention Assignment-Albuquerque NM

6. What were some of the most difficult challenges faced and how were they overcome? Please explain.

Finding a balance in dividing my time between fire education, prevention, and information activities as well as management activities.

Having a new position with a broad title so that many projects fall into my lap.

Finding/understanding a balance between local activities/projects and my involvement in regional/national activities: out-of-park assignments, details, opportunities to write curriculums/plans/etc. Are there some standard expectations?

(I'm still working on all of these.)

One of the most difficult challenges is preaching preparedness to an area that rarely gets dangerous fires. They do happen, but only about every twenty years (we're due) and by that time people have lost interest in Firewise principles. I told my SCA team that we are Noah, building an ark in the desert. We have not been able to overcome that challenge in every case. However, people are interested in mapping, which will help with locating them when the fires occur.

One of the most difficult challenges faced was trying to assist the other cluster parks in their fire-related information needs. I have not had a chance to visit all of our six other parks and talk in person to their staffs about this. I have contacted them all, but don't know if they realize how I can assist them if needed. I hope to overcome this by visiting the parks when time (and money) allows and showing them examples of the products I can produce for them and how I can help them with public relations regarding fire.

I also found that getting park staff (even some in the fire program itself) to recognize the value of this position was at first difficult. I overcame this by talking to individuals and letting them know the scope of my job and also by showing them some of the products that I can produce related to fire management and how these products could make their jobs more acceptable to the public and in some cases, easier because of this.

My most difficult challenge is smoke and air quality. It's just one of those issues that will always upset people. The most unpleasant days I experience at work happen when I'm getting yelled at about smoke. Not sure if that will ever go away... We have made positive steps like writing a smoke communication strategy, working with an interagency smoke council, and partnering with the local air district to put our smoke impacts in a larger regional context. We will continue in these efforts.

The learning curve for a brand new position was one of the most difficult challenges I faced. I am still learning, but am a lot more comfortable with the subject matter and the position. It's just a matter of learning and growing.

My most difficult challenges involve time management. This need for time management comes from other challenges that I face XXX. A tremendous need and want for fire information/education exists in NPS XXX parks and that need includes all age groups. Within the parks, interpreters do not speak, have not learned and consequently do not teach about fire. Many NPS employees are not sure what NPS fire management does apart from managing helicopters. Fire is rarely represented in visitor centers and rarely spoken about until smoke lingers in the air. Because of this awesome need and an often times willing to learn audience, I am tempted to go down a multitude of paths to create programs, conduct training, submit an article here, create a web page there.

Another challenge that I face everyday is the want and need to study, research fire in XXX specific fire ecology and fire history. And yet I am faced with to dos each day and have had little time to research. This makes me aware that I do not know as much as I would like about my job and this perceived lack of knowledge is worrisome to me, being in this “communication” position. I long to shut off lotus notes, Firewise workshops and the like for a week and just read more in depth what I am talking and teaching about. Each day, I try to carve out an hour where I study fire XXX.

The other great obstacle is the sheer size of the area. There are different park units in XXX, XX experience large-scale periodic fires and which I work closely with. These XXX parks encompass XXX acres. My reality does not include travel to all of the parks in these first few years nor meeting the resource and interpretative staffs face to face etc. These realities force me to streamline my agendas and figure out ways that I can create templates that will work for all XXX parks that experience fire. I take advantage of the phone, lotus notes, the intranet and mail. I ask for help, information and feedback from the NPS fire management staff as well as the cooperating agencies. In the next few years I will develop with the help of others, fire web sites for each of the XXX parks and a semi-annual newsletter. Taking constant little steps helps.

Every fire and fuels project near a community needs an education component. With projects going on both inside and outside the park, this is an enormous amount of work. Our most successful WUI projects had dedicated contract / partner project managers which functioned as the primary liason between community, park, fire department and contractors. These individuals did a lot of community outreach which was efficient and effective because of their day to day knowledge of the project progress and status.

I was, and am still, the new kid on the block. In some peoples' minds I'm suspect because I'm from the NPS. Pitching in, looking for common goals, learning about their issues and goals, active listening, avoiding defensiveness and laughing have helped. Working side by side during high fire danger was good work and good bonding. Convincing a local IC that yes, IOFs can serve a purpose, was a fun challenge.

- Bureaucracy and chain of command in large park often makes accomplishing tasks difficult and there is little direct contact with management team - had to adjust to large park mentality and realize that I will have limited opportunity to influence management decisions.
 - FEPIS position not readily welcomed into park and felt some resentment from mainly interp staff about grade level of position – still working hard to gain respect.
 - How FEPIS fits into big park structure with lots of specialists PIO, Education Specialist, Interp staff already in place. How to do the job without stepping on toes. - Working on establishing relations with all divisions but XXX should establish SOPs
 - Coordination of the SCA Fire Education Corps – required very close supervision to keep program on track and in sync with park management goals.
 - Physical separation of fire staff (XXX separate office locations) - relocated to common fire management office.
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Dealing with some park employees in their knowledge or lack of it on fire. Most just see fire with an endless budget.

Dealing with the park superintendent sometime his ideas are not on the same page as mine. He throws things into the pot...like a big fire movie at XXX.

The internal cultural of XXX is not a team player environment. It's like they hate fire and the fact this fire discipline has grown in this area. You just about need a cast iron stomach to keep letting comments go by and let other things slide cause these folks don't know any better, or are too small minded to try any harder to work as a team. Lots of finger pointing....Yuk! I have always tried to go on fire assignments because the team environment and brainstorming work we do as information specialist is very refreshing.

The amount of time it takes to develop and maintain partnerships; time and patience.

Getting the Jr. Firefighter Program up and running with unknown staff and advertising early. I met with XXX's Engine crew and provided them with a detailed outline and objectives to meet. After practicing and using the props it went really well. Coordinated with the Interpretation staff to advertise the program in the summer paper. Provided training for front line interpretive staff who were passing out the cards for the program.

Supporting the XXX fire program equally. I was tied to XXX and didn't coordinate as much as I needed to with the XXX staff. To correct that additional communications and effort will be focused on XXX needs.

7. What issues were not resolved to your satisfaction and need further review? What is your recommendation for resolution?

I still desperately want some one-on-one web training so I can be proficient at updating and adding to web pages. The one-on-one training is very important to me so the training is tailored to my specific needs, ability, and available resources.

I think we should figure out a way to include an education component in project funding requests. If we required researchers to report findings to Roberta and Tina, we might be able to get the word out much more quickly, about what we're learning with the money we spend. The National Fire Plan is funding research...we need to know the results.

On that line, I have spent an enormous amount of time this year - looking for old fire prevention posters and old fire fighting pictures (to illustrate the history and change of the national fire program); and "before and after" shots of pre- fire suppression and the accumulation of fuels now - and all sorts of other such graphic and/or statistical needs. We need a cache of tools for educational programs and presentations.

The SCA team arrived prepared to complete demonstration projects, and I didn't have access to funding for their projects. I think that must have been considered for this year, though, because I've been able to request funding through our WUI coordinator. It frustrates me that the Fire Education/Information and WUI Specialist positions are two different positions at the regional level, because I do both here, and so often they overlap.

I've read practically everything I could get my hands on, and have not really found a good fire ecology lesson for children – especially for midwestern forests. There's a real hole there. I "borrowed" one from Yosemite, and will work with that, but it would be great if we had some kind of "train the trainer" class.

I've been busy establishing a program (and still have a long way to go) and have all but ignored the other parks for which I am responsible. One of my first assignments was to serve as Acting FMO – which was a bit out of my league. I will also help XXX with their FMP contract. Outside of that, I'm not sure how to proceed with my satellite parks – except maybe to develop programs for their interpretive staffs to use.

One last thing...I'm not sure we all (or maybe it's just me) understand the connection to and the importance of the National Fire Plan. I remember calling all around the region, looking for someone who could tell me exactly which of the documents on the website was the actual plan. (The answer is - two of them!) I know we all cite the National Fire Plan, and I've read it from cover to cover. But I'm not sure I understand how it relates to me – except for funding my job! This is hard to explain, but I think we need a clearer picture somehow.

Presently I am the lone NPS member of the XXX Fire Education and Prevention Committee (there hasn't been a member of the NPS for a number of years). I find that the NPS is still seen as second string player in fire management behind the Forest Service, BLM and even the

states. As for education and especially prevention, it is apparent that the NPS's role is quite different than from the other agencies. I have been tasked with a number of duties that, in some cases, will not benefit the NPS to a great degree. While I have no problem in working with interagency groups and believe it to be vital to fire management in this XXX, I do believe that the NPS should be seen as a major player in this effort and that our management philosophies are somewhat different. I do not have a recommendation at this time as to how to remedy my concerns, although I do think it needs to start at the highest levels of fire management recognize that there are different methods to achieve the same goal.

Communicating effectively with the field and our office still can be a challenge, but we're getting there slowly but surely!

I continue to look for those key messages we on a national and regional level convey to audiences. What do we want to teach about fire I ask myself? There are so many conflicting messages that are sent out, ex. good fire vs. bad fire. Is fire really good or bad? Fire is just a natural occurrence. People perceive fire as good or bad. We, as a group need to pay very close attention to the nomenclature we use to describe fire. We as a group need to listen to the tv, news, read science journals, speak to people who are not in our own arena of thought and work and see what they hear and perceive about fire. What are the messages that stick with them? We then need to talk as a group about what we hear. We need to ask ourselves if that is the message we convey or want to convey and if it is not we need to formulate a plan in order to change these perceptions. We need to talk about and develop simple, clear fire messages. At my own level, I try to continually listen to what people of all audiences say about fire, listen for what they know and what they do not understand. I hope to take all that information and formulate a plan that stipulates what I want to say about XXX wildland fire and how I will say it time and time again. I want that message to be simple and yet I want to be creative, educational and still convey that same message. In order for FEFIS to engage in these sorts of conversations and develop long-term goals, I would like to see a National Park Service Fire Communication and Education Committee created. This committee would provide leadership and working groups that would enable us to outline and achieve our goals. I would also like to see some programmatic direction from the national office and perhaps this committee could provide that.

Every WUI project should include a plan for community outreach. Generally, this would be best accomplished by the project managers, or by an SCA team serving the WUI program. The FEFIS cannot get too bogged down in the day to day aspects of project management as it must serve all the projects to some extent, in addition to developing programs, partnerships and communications infrastructure.

Credibility and communications will continue to be issues and that's okay. 'Tis the nature of things.

Because of the drought, high fire danger and active fire seasons and because of a change in leadership in the XXX fire program, work on community firewise planning has been delayed. I stand ready to assist, however and I think we'll make some progress this year.

- Budget management not delegated to FEPIS, which results in ineffective planning. - A GS-11 level position should have some budgetary responsibilities.
 - No park radio/cell phone issued which reduces efficiency level and will result in major communications breakdown during critical incident ie wildfire. - Obtain radio and phone.
 - Not clear on level of assistance we provide to Support Parks? Does Superintendent need to request our assistance or if a fire related matter do we automatically step in? - Arrange site visit and clarify role.
 - Sometimes end up with collateral duties that might actually fall better to operations staff ie non-FEPIS related committee representation, RFA program and training committee assignments. - View them as training opportunities.
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Adequate support for XXX's fire program. Get together with the XXX FMO and identify needs early and produce a schedule of activities and products that would further the goals of the fire information/education program for that park.